

**Operating Principles Governing the Work of the Panel**  
**Submission from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**  
**(OHCHR)**

*Contact information*

*Ana Paula Souza*  
*Human Rights Officer, Environment and Climate Change Team*  
*Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)*  
*Email address: ana.souza@un.org*

The following elements are included in Resolution 5/8. Please indicate by clicking on the box(es) where you believe these elements should be included (i.e., operating principles, rules of procedure, guidelines, or other relevant documents, or if they are not relevant). Some key terms have been grouped together for the purpose of this tabular analysis, there is inevitably some overlap across principles.

	Operating Principle	Rules of Procedure	Guidelines	Other	Not relevant
<b>CREDIBILITY</b>					
<b>Robustness/Rigour</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Integrity/Objectivity / Independence/Impartiality/ Lack of Bias (avoiding conflicts of interest)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interdisciplinary / Multidisciplinary / Balance of disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>RELEVANCE/SALIENCE</b>					
Policy-relevant (and not policy prescriptive)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>LEGITIMACY</b>					
<b>Inclusivity/Balance</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- indigenous inclusivity*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- geographic balance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- regional balance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- gender balance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-- balance of disciplines (see also Credibility/Interdisciplinary...)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>CROSS-CUTTING THEMES</b>					
<b>Transparency</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordination (without duplication) / Complementarity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost-Effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please provide any relevant comments on your choices above:**

In order to flourish and develop, science requires the robust protection of freedom of research. In this regard, the principles of **integrity, transparency and participation** are essential to make science objective and reliable, and to ensure that it is not subject to interests that are not scientific or are inconsistent with fundamental human rights principles and the welfare of society.

The new panel must include safeguards to avoid the **risks associated with the existence of conflicts of interest** by creating an environment in which actual or perceived conflicts of interest are adequately disclosed and regulated, especially those involving scientific researchers who give policy advice to policymakers and other public officials (see [CESCR GC 25](#)). Guidelines should also be in place to safeguard against attempts by business entities to achieve policy change by influencing research and knowledge production. (see [A/77/201](#))

Please also note the following precisions in relation to some of the concepts above:

- **Robustness** should not be applied in lieu of the **precautionary principle**, which should be applied as a guiding principle of the science policy panel throughout its mandate.
- **Indigenous inclusivity** should be replaced by Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge or simply, Indigenous Peoples. In addition to the knowledge they hold, Indigenous Peoples should participate in the science policy panel also to ensure that science is not used as an instrument of cultural imposition.
- **Participation** is not a synonym of inclusivity and should be included in the list under “legitimacy” – see additional explanation in the section below.

**The following table includes other elements that may be considered. Please indicate by clicking on the box(es) where you believe these elements should be included (i.e., operating principles, rules of procedure, guidelines, or other relevant documents, or if they are not relevant). It is also possible to add additional potential operating principles to be considered.**

<b>OTHER</b>	Operating Principle	Rules of Procedure	Guidelines	Other	Not relevant
Promotion of innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comprehensive, holistic, or integrative approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus based approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Providing accessible outputs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others					
Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-discrimination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection of groups in vulnerable situations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection of scientists against harassment and attacks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intergenerational equity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please provide any relevant comments on your choices above:**

- **Human rights-based approach (HRBA):** Pollution is responsible for ongoing, massive human rights harms that negatively affect multiple aspects of human life. The human rights-based approach guarantees all people the rights to participation, access to information and access to justice in environmental matters. This ensures inclusive and informed decision-making aligned with scientific evidence and the needs of people in vulnerable situations. It also ensures that alternatives are assessed regarding their implications for human rights and the environment, guaranteeing that they are not misleading, short sighted and do not lead to further harm. The rights-based approach also requires Member States to be guided by key principles including non-discrimination, transparency, accountability, precaution, prevention and intergenerational equity.

The essential attributes of a HRBA are the following:

- As policies and programmes are formulated, the main objective should be to fulfil human rights.
  - The rights-holders and their entitlements must be identified as well as the corresponding duty-bearers and their obligations in order to find ways to strengthen the capacities of rights-holders to make their claims and of duty-bearers to meet their obligations.
  - Principles and standards derived from international human rights law – especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the core universal human rights treaties, should guide all policies and programming in all phases of the process.
- **Participation:**<sup>1</sup> An effective science-policy interface mechanism must engage all relevant stakeholders, securing opportunities for informed participation. “Citizen science” projects create opportunities for participation in data collection, contributing to data analysis and interpretation and partnering in the dissemination of scientific information. The citizen science model of engagement, which ties scientific inquiry to the needs of communities, can contribute to the relevance and impact of the scientific research, ensuring that the benefits of science reach the very people who need their application. Knowledge empowers the communities to exercise agency on their own behalf. (see [A/HRC/48/61](#))
  - **Non-discrimination:** information concerning the risks and benefits of science and technology should be accessible without discrimination. The new science policy panel must put in place all necessary efforts to overcome persistent inequalities in scientific advancement through culturally and gender-appropriate means of education and communication, with the aim of encouraging the widest participation in scientific progress of those populations that have traditionally been excluded from such progress. (see also [CESCR GC 25](#))
  - **Protection of groups in vulnerable situations:** Special attention should be paid to groups that have experienced systemic discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to participate in and to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, such as women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, frontline communities, and persons living in poverty.
  - **Protection of scientists against harassment and attacks:** As a precondition, there should be an enabling environment for the conduct of scientific inquiry free from undue interference and conflict of interest. Scientists who expose the negative impacts of toxics can be considered as human rights defenders and are often subject to attacks, threats, smear campaigns, intimidation and harassment by entities with a vested financial interest in the marketing of hazardous substances. Such actions include legal action, accusations of misconduct, withdrawal of funding, censorship, thwarting career progression, loss of employment, loss or denial of tenure and intimidation of family members. The new science policy panel should have specific guidelines to ensure the protection of scientists engaging with its mandate. (see [A/HRC/48/61](#))

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<sup>1</sup> Participation is a core element of the right to science. This principle is echoed in other relevant normative statements, including principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the 1998 Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and the 2018 Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Partnership and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement).

- **Intergenerational equity/future generations:** The new science policy panel must be guided by the developmental, health and environmental needs of present and future generations. That is, to promote prosperity and quality of life for all, the needs of today's generations should be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Please provide your written submission in the space below:**

The mandate of the new Science Policy Panel must explicitly refer to human rights, including the rights to health, to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and the right to everyone to enjoy the benefits of science.<sup>2</sup> Incorporating a human rights-based approach to the mandate and scope of the future Science Policy Panel is in line with States legally binding human rights obligations. A human rights-based approach to pollution calls for a vision that aligns with scientific evidence, centres on principles of accountability and informed participation and gives special attention to the needs of people in vulnerable situations. It also requires the future Panel to be guided by key principles including precaution, prevention, intergenerational equity and non-discrimination. To ensure that private interests do not exert undue influence, the future Panel should include clear provisions on transparency and conflict of interest as a means to ensure that corporate political engagement is responsible and rights-respecting.

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<sup>2</sup> See article 15.1.b of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, that reads: 1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone: (b) To enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications.